



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### Federal Student Aid

**TO:** Secretary Rod Paige  
U.S. Secretary of Education

**FROM:** Terri Shaw  
Chief Operating Officer

**RE:** FSA Weekly Report

**DATE:** March 1, 2004

### **THE WEEK AHEAD**

**Second Annual East Palo Alto College Fair:** On March 6, FSA representatives will participate in Second Annual East Palo Alto College Fair in East Palo Alto, CA.

**Federal Update:** On March 3, FSA representatives will present a Federal Update to Washington Community College Financial Aid Council in North Bend, WA.

### **FSA IN THE FIELD**

**U. S. Department of Education Small Business Outreach Conference:** On February 23, FSA representatives made several presentations on small business opportunities at the Department's Small Business Outreach Conference. The goal of the conference is to educate small businesses about ED and inform them of opportunities and how to compete.

**Outreach to Native Americans:** On February 24, FSA representatives attended the annual Native Women Supporting Each Other Luncheon in Washington, DC. The luncheon, timed to coincide with the National Congress of American Indians convention, is a networking opportunity for Native American women from tribal councils, education and health organizations, and nonprofit associations. Victoria Vasques, ED's Director of the Office of Indian Education, spoke at the luncheon and mentioned the importance of federal student aid awareness.

**District of Columbia Consolidation of Educational Services (DCCES) Ninth Annual Conference:** On February 23, FSA representatives participated in the District of Columbia Consolidation of Educational Services (DCCES) Ninth Annual Conference. FSA representatives conducted a workshop for TRIO Professionals entitled "Federal Student Aid: Programs and Services to Connect Students to College."

**College Fair Season:** On February 29, FSA representatives kicked off the 2004 college fair season at the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) College Fair in Tampa, FL. More than 3,000 students and parents were in attendance. FSA partners with NACAC to further promote federal student aid and its availability.

**Student Aid on the Web:** For the week ending February 21, *Student Aid on the Web* recorded 361,323 visits, 6,064,881 hits and 661,940 page views representing increases in usage of 316.9%, 118.9%, and 104.4%, respectively. In addition, My FSA, the *Student Aid on the Web* feature that offers students and their families a single source of *free* information on choosing a career, selecting a college and identifying resources to pay for higher education, has now recorded 22,123 accounts. Finally, 100% of those surveyed last week reported they would recommend *Student Aid on the Web* to friends or colleagues.

**Showcase of Excellence:** *Student Aid on the Web* has been named a finalist for the Federal Leadership Council's Showcase of Excellence. Each year at FOSE, the Federal Leadership Council's Showcase of Excellence presents federal government IT projects representing the finest implementations of citizen-centric electronic government. Ten are selected to demonstrate their program in the Federal Leadership Council Showcase of Excellence located in E-Town at FOSE. Two are then chosen by the Federal Leadership Council Executive Committee to receive the Showcase of Excellence Award.

**FAFSA on the Web Volume:** On February 28, FAFSA on the Web received its 2 millionth 2004-05 application. Year-to-date, FAFSA on the Web volume is 23.5% higher than last year.

On February 29, FAFSA on the Web received 137,741 applications. Last year, the highest volume day was only 97,866 applications. For the week ending February 29, FAFSA on the Web received 604,200 applications, almost 15% more than peak week volume last year.

Year-to-date, FSA is receiving 80% of all FAFSA applications submitted electronically (Original, FAFSA on the Web, Renewal Web and EZ FAFSA on the web). This is the highest percentage of electronic applications ever processed resulting in better service to our students at lower cost to the taxpayer.

**Customer Service Call Center Statistics:** For the week ending February 21, the Customer Service Call Center received 330 inquiries, posted 12 items to FSA Tech and posted 6 items to IFAP.

**Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP.gov) Web site Usage:** For the week ending February 21, [www.ifap.ed.gov](http://www.ifap.ed.gov) received 74,354 visits and 2.4 million hits. IFAP's Subscription service continues to grow with membership increasing by almost 9% during January to 4,420 members.

**Schools Portal Usage:** For the week ending February 21, [www.fsa4schools.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4schools.ed.gov) received 13,853 visits and 1.3 million hits.

**Financial Partners (FP) Portal Usage:** For the week ending February 20, the FP Portal received over 54,866 hits and almost 2272 visits.

### **OPERATIONAL METRICS**

**Application Activities through February 22, 2004:** The Central Processing System (CPS) has processed 1,708,964 applications for the 2004-05 cycle, a 9.9% increase over the 2003-04 cycle.

**Program Disbursements:** Through the week ending February 21, annual Pell and Direct Loan disbursements reached \$10.1 billion and \$9.7 billion respectively for the 2003-04 academic year. Through the week ending February 27, annual FFEL disbursements reached \$21.3 billion for the 2003-04 academic year. Through January, annual Direct Consolidation Loan disbursements reached \$2.24 billion.

**Total Default Recoveries:** Through February 20, total FSA Default Recoveries for FY04 reached \$573.6 million, an increase of 21% from this time last year. Total non-consolidation recoveries reached \$494.1 million, an increase of 40%. Combined Recoveries from our private collection agency efforts have reached \$449.5 million, up 26% over the same period in FY03.

**1-800-4-FED-AID through February 21, 2004:** Year to date, the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) has received 1.197 million calls, a 9.4% decrease over last year. Service levels have increased with 99.1% of calls completed, a 0.2% increase over last year, and the average speed to answer reduced by 78.1% over last year to 1.8 seconds.

**Direct Loan Servicing Call Center Phone Activity through February 20, 2004:** Year to date, the Direct Loan Servicing Centers received 985,902 calls to the Interactive Voice Response System, a decrease of 7.23% from 2003. Of those calls received, Borrower Services representatives handled 718,940, a decrease of 9.34% from 2003. The average speed of answer was 3.93 seconds, a decrease of 49.27% from 2003. The resolve rate for the Voice Response System was 26.88%, an increase of 7.25% from 2003. The Abandoned Call Rate was 0.16%, a decrease of 50.40 % from 2003.

## **KEY ISSUES**

**Draft Cohort Default Rates:** On February 17, FSA released the FY 2002 Draft Cohort Default Rates to all eligible schools for review. The National Cohort Default Rate will be released to the public in September.

**Braille Student Aid Information:** Copies of the 2004-05 Student Guide, the FAFSA and Funding Your Education are available in Braille through FSA and EDPubs.

**Pilot Voluntary Flexible Agreement (VFA) Proposal** – FSA is reviewing a request from the Arkansas Guaranty Agency to be considered for a pilot VFA program. VFA's provide incentives to guarantee agencies for better performance.

**E-Gov/eLoans:** On February 23, eLoans partner agencies met to discuss workgroup progress and next steps. The Business to Government Lender Reporting workgroup shared a draft proposal of a data standardization pilot with Mortgage Industry Standards Maintenance Organization and asked for agency comment. The Risk Management Coordination workgroup presented their final report on citizen access to CAIVRS (Credit Alert Interactive Voice Response System) and will circulate the draft for final comment. The Electronic Lenders

Weekly Report to Secretary Paige  
March 1, 2004

Payment workgroup reported that Housing and Urban Development is on schedule for a March implementation of Pay.gov.

**GovLoans.gov:** On February 17-18, Human Factors International conducted usability interviews with likely users of the GovLoans.gov Web site to obtain feedback about the site's features and functionality. The interviews were conducted at the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Usability Lab using a prototype of the GovLoans.gov site.

Human Factors International provided a final report summarizing the results and recommendations from the interviews. The GovLoans team is making minor changes to content, language, and design based on citizen feedback.

### **ON THE HORIZON**

**Presentations at Regional and State Financial Aid Administrator Conferences:** FSA representatives will be making presentations at the following state financial aid administrator conferences in the coming weeks:

March 10-12	Missouri Association of Student Financial Aid Personnel Spring Conference
March 15-16	South Dakota Association of Student Financial Aid
March 22-24	Pacific Islands Financial Aid Association Annual Conference
April 7-9	Kentucky Association of Financial Aid Administrators Conference
April 18-21	South Carolina Association of Federal Aid Administrators Conference
April 19	Illinois Association of Financial Aid Administrators Conference

**Private Career Schools Conference:** On March 14, FSA representatives will be presenting at the Private Career Schools Conference in Dallas, TX.

**National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs (NCHELP):** From March 14 - 17, FSA representatives will make several presentations at the NCHELP Conference in Myrtle Beach, SC.

**Common Origination and Disbursements (COD) Focus Group:** On April 15-16, FSA will host the annual COD Focus Group in held in Reston, VA. This is an opportunity for schools to share their input into future system requirements.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Please contact Chris Greene at 377-4003 with any questions.